Realistic Idealism
An Editorial

Jesus and Christmas
In Philosophers' Hands

The Westminster Standards
Their Theology

Labor Issues
Scripture Teaching

Evolutionism
Among University Students

Voices
News Letters
Reviews

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Realistic Idealism

An Editorial for the New Year

As we slip across the threshold of 1944 and face the world of today as well as the task of the future, both our Christian idealism and our Christian realism are constantly subjected to bombardment.

The Christian, just because he is a Christian, is both an idealist and a realist. In fact, in a sense his whole task may be defined as a proper integration of the ideal and the real. That our faith is essentially idealistic no Christian doubts. By idealism in this connection we do not, of course, mean the philosophical movement known by that name. Idealism in that sense and the Christian Faith are incompatible. We are here simply using the word in its common meaning of believing in the ideal that lies beyond and above the realities of this life.

Such idealism is of the very essence of the Christian Faith. For us the great, the ultimate reality is not that which we see round about us in this ephemeral and sin-laden world, but the living God, whom eye hath not seen, the Holy One of Israel. The Christian has not only been saved by faith, but he also lives by faith in reference to the future. His Bible begins with Genesis and the creation of nature, but it ends with the Apocalypse and a new heaven and a new earth. Paul pictures the Christian as longing for the complete deliverance that is coming and lies distinctly in the future. The Christian is a pilgrim and he is traveling toward the celestial city. He longs for the ideal and its complete realization, when God shall be all and in all. Let the materialist and the socialist ridicule his religion as a vain hope for “pie in the sky”—he longs ardently for the new heaven and the new earth, which are not yet, but which shall be.

With this glorious idealism in his heart the Christian moves in the midst of this workaday world. And that is where he belongs. God has placed him there. He must be realistic about his idealism. Many Christians prefer to flee from this world. They would hug the ideal and forget about life’s grim realities. The mystical dreamer, the Roman Catholic ascetic, and the utopian Dispensationalist are all doing this very thing, though each in quite a different way. Calvinists, though in a still different way, are likewise exposed to this danger. The truth of the matter is that deep down in our heart we are constantly in danger of hugging an unrealistic idealism. It is but another way of following the line of least resistance.

Scripture is wholesomely realistic and genuinely idealistic at the same time.

Modernism has for some decades been marked by a superficial idealism divorced from the realism of life. The reality of sin was denied, and so the reality of the cross, of the atonement, of the forgiveness of sin, of redemption faded out of the picture. It was an unrealistic form of “Christian” belief.

The revolt against this Modernism (now called by some Modernists the “older” Modernism) is one of the outstanding developments of recent theological thought. It was Pusey who exclaimed in his sermon “Beyond Modernism”: “My soul, what a world, which the gentle modernism of my younger ministry, with its kindly sentiments and lush optimism, does not fit at all! We must go beyond that. Because I know that I am speaking here to many minds powerfully affected by modernism, I say to you as to myself: Come out of these intellectual cubicles and sentimental retreats which we built by adapting Christian faith to an optimistic era. Underline this: Sin is real.” It was another modernist—Walter Marshall Horton—whose book, significantly entitled Realistic Theology, begins with the chapter entitled: The Decline of Liberalism and the Rise of Realism. Liberalism has turned upon itself and has exposed its own lack of realism.

But this “New Orthodoxy,” as some like to call this new liberalism, has not given us the true integration of the ideal and the real. It has properly turned upon its own lack of realism, and this is to be appreciated as far as it goes. But it fails again because, despite its more realistic language and its more realistic appreciation of many phases of the modern man’s experience, it fails to preach and teach the realism of the Scriptures. Only God pictures us as we truly are. Only in the supernatural revelation of the Sacred Record do we find a genuine integration of realism and idealism. And that is the reason also why Barthianism, despite the many splendid things it has to say in the face of the modernistic optimistic idealism, does not offer the true solution. The Dialectic Theology with its conception of “myth” and the “supra-historical” has robbed Christianity both in its objective, historical and in its subjective, experiential phases of its reality.

Nor is a truly realistic approach found by many who repudiate Modernism and Barthianism both. The “orthodox” are ever in danger of an unrealistic approach to the truth of the Word of God, though their distortion is orientated quite differently. The
denial of common grace by some and the dreaming of Judaistic-chiliastic dreams by others—all of them very “orthodox”—is but another form of idealism run rampant for lack of integration with a truly biblical realism. These differ from the modernists in that their idealistic, optimistic onenessid is not grounded in belief in the inherent goodness of man in his present state (as was the case with the humanist and modernist), but in a divorce between this wicked world and the ideal as God sees it and as it will be realized only among the elect, whether on earth or ultimately in the future. There lies an essential Anabaptism at the bottom of the denial of common grace as well as at the base of all Dispensationalism. When the true realism of the Scriptures is not grasped, a distorted form of Christianity results also among the orthodox.

Also for us believers there is the constant tension between the ideal and the real. In our Christian living, in our planning, in our attitudes toward other groups we must constantly strive to find a wholesome, biblical integration of Christian idealism and Christian realism. The practical problem which we are constantly facing as conscientious Christians is how to be true to the exalted ideal and yet to relate the realization of that ideal to the actualities of life, in the midst of which in God’s providence we are called to live and from which we cannot and may not divorce ourselves.

When our idealism is divorced from the actualities of life we may sometimes do more harm than good, our good intentions notwithstanding. When a principle or an ideal is divorced from the actualities of the life in which we strive to apply or to realize it, we may find all our efforts to be for naught. In such a case the protagonists of such “idealistic” action will in many cases hold that they and they alone are the champions of the pure, divinely approved ideal, while in reality they may be lacking in good, sanctified common sense. The danger in such cases is that when failure comes, we readily consider ourselves martyrs for God’s cause, whereas in reality we should perhaps confess that we did not combine wisdom with knowledge, realistic observation with idealistic endeavor.

The Bible teaches us again and again that these two are both valid. The same Lord who taught us the ideal of the simple, absolute antithesis in the words: He that is not with Me is against Me, also taught us the parable of the Wheat and the Tares. He who clearly enunciated the simple ideal antithesis between “the world” and “those whom the Father gave me,” also is the one of whom we read that he loved the rich young ruler who was nevertheless disobedient to the heavenly vision. In the fulness of divine truth and the execution of our Christian duty the absolute and the relative, the divine and the human, the eternal and the temporal, the “theological” and the “psychological,” the ideal and the real ever lie intertwined as long as we do not attain to the absolute and ultimate state, and it is the part of sanctified wisdom to integrate the two in the practical duties of our everyday life.

One of the dangers to which we who are enthusiastic about the Reformed Faith are constantly exposed is the cultivation of an unrealistic idealism in the practical activities of life. Just as many people have lost all idealism on the one hand, so there are those whose idealism is so abstract, so remote from life, so impractical, so unrealistic that with the best of intentions they may do more harm than good to God’s cause. Meanwhile they readily develop the martyr complex when failure dogs their steps and condemn others for lack of “principle” who counseled combining wisdom with knowledge, a realistic approach with idealistic enthusiasm.

Let us take an illustration from life.

Yes, the story is authentic, though the names do not matter.

Not many years ago a keen-minded, dynamic young Calvinist caught a vision. He saw the need of a Christian press and especially of a Christian daily. Having himself had some experience as a newspaper reporter, he felt the Lord called him to this task of founding a Christian daily. Giving up the ministry only a few years after his ordination, he devoted himself with singular enthusiasm and unselfish zeal to the realization of this grand ideal: an American Christian daily. Agents were put into the field soliciting the earnings of Christian people for investment in this great, idealistic project. Was it not pleasing to God? Should we not sacrifice to build up a Christian press, especially a Christian daily press? Was there not a great need of testifying for our Lord on the pages of the daily newspaper? Was not this a great, worthy, noble God-willed project?

The paper was launched.

In Chicago, that centrally located metropolis, the first issues rolled off the press. At last a great dream was to be realized. But it took only a few weeks before the entire venture was on the rocks. The idealistic enthusiast who singlehandedly undertook the launching of this huge project saw his hopes shattered within a few weeks. Soon his name was in contempt on the lips of many. Bitterness and disappointment filled the hearts of many small investors who had sacrificed their savings for an
idealistic undertaking in the hope that they might also get some returns on their hard-earned savings. Why rehearse the heartaches? Why tell more? The end of the story—forgetting about the dollars and cents—was the blasting of the ideal of a Christian daily for years to come, and the shattering of the life’s ideal of a sincere enthusiast.

We are not interested in throwing bricks at this enthusiastic dreamer of dreams. Even less are we desirous of approving his course of procedure in this bold venture. There is no need of throwing stones at this late hour, and we must confess that we have more admiration for the idealism and enthusiasm of this dreamer of dreams, who came to grief, than for those of his critics who in no way supported or advised him.

But the lesson that is written in large characters over this now defunct project is that the finest idealism will go on the rocks if it is not mixed with a sound realism.

And does all this not have an application to the recent project which is being launched by a group of enthusiastic Calvinists for the founding of an American Calvinistic University?

We suggest that those interested in this matter view the proposed project under this aspect. C. B.

Jesus in a Philosopher’s Christmas

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Jesus in a Philosopher’s Christmas

IT IS Christmas Day and on it a reverent philosopher has a strange unrest. There is no day for Plato, nor Aristotle, nor Kant, that the world so marks as this commemoration of the nativity of Jesus Christ. Other men have shaped wide currents of reflective history, but here is a person yet more unique. Better than any other he saw man as he is, and gave an answer to the longings of the human spirit; higher than any other he lifted the moral law to absoluteness, and then lived out its very perfection in his daily walk.

But all this is not the whole story. What turns the human mind into a battlefield on Christmas Day is something more far-reaching. For surging back and forth in review and in conflict on this day of worship and prayer, of reunion and merrymaking, of gift and tinsel, is the incessant reminder that if Jesus Christ is right, then all the world is mad, and if all the world is right then Jesus Christ is mad. And if so, then why Christmas?

Perhaps I should have waited for Good Friday, but today I saw them again, nailing him to the cross outside Jerusalem. Despite conflicting rumor and political machinations, the Jews condemned him basically because he claimed to be God in the flesh. The charge was changed to treason when Jesus was marched before Pilate, because that would arouse action by a Roman provincial governor, but it was on the count of blasphemy that the sanhedrin found him guilty of death.

That is disturbing enough. His contemporaries were so certain that he claimed deity that the highest religious tribunal of the day condemned him for blasphemy; his disciples did not dispute the charge, but insisted that he is in fact God incarnate. Great lawyers, after reviewing the testimony of the gospel writers, have declared that if Jesus was simply a Jewish citizen, the conviction was substantially right. The question whether the trial was legal in all its forms is really quite secondary; no technicality could overshadow the fact that if Jesus as a mere man claimed powers belonging to Jehovah, then he violated the law.

What then may be said for him?

The early church, at any rate, spoke clearly. The resurrection attested Jesus’ claim. Though the symbols were not definitely formulated until much later, the Nicene and Chalcedonian creeds and the church’s confession of “two natures and one person” were brought to light that resurrection morn. It was really Easter that assured Christmas, as man sees things, though from higher ground, only Christmast could assure Easter.

The contemporaries of Jesus saw the issue clearly. In the last analysis, the self-consciousness of Jesus was all-important. It was foolish for men to ascribe deity to him, where he not conscious of it; hence too it were foolish for men to deny, were the Messianic consciousness within him. The high priest commanded Jesus to speak on the very point: “I adjure thee, by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.” Jesus replied with the clear Jewish affirmative formula: “Thou hast said.” Not only so, but he commented further: “Hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man...
sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.” Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying “he hath spoken blasphemy.” Thus the sanhedrin, beginning with the assumption that Jesus could not be God, put him to death because of his Messianic self-consciousness.

Simon Greenleaf, the Royall professor of law in Harvard University a century ago, wrote plainly: “It is not easy to perceive on what ground his conduct could have been defended before any tribunal, unless upon that of his superhuman character. No lawyer, it is conceived, would have thought of placing his defence upon any other basis.”

In other words, deny the deity of Christ and we must stand with the crucifiers of Christ rather than with the followers. That is the dilemmatic predicament of a reverent philosopher’s mind on Christmas Day. For there are a great host who, in their antipathy for the doctrine of the “two natures,” nevertheless number themselves today with the friends rather than the enemies of Christ.

For 25 years most American writers have avoided the person and work of Christ in their treaties. But now, we read, the theological moratorium on this subject has ended. The list of books on christology is growing. Still, on Christmas Day, one becomes impressed that, one after another, these writers steal from the circle of Jesus’ followers, and betray him with a Judas’ kiss into the hands of his enemies; or that they make their way quietly into that meeting of the sanhedrin, offering themselves as witnesses that “he hath spoken blasphemy.”

Take for example Horton’s volume on Our Eternal Contemporary. He writes that “a truly Christian religious consciousness” prevailed at Nicaea and Chalcedon, yet he comments on “the Christmas myths,” adds an epilogue for non-Christians assuring them that he does not seek to “disparage the faith of Jews in their Torah, the faith of Buddhists in their Dharma” and in general denies the essential deity of Christ by the modern device of reinterpretation. All of which places him with the sanhedrin, rather than in the upper room.

So too John Baillie, who reveals how much reduced is The Place of Jesus Christ in Modern Christianity. We now believe the doctrine of the two natures to have been mistaken, he affirms, because God’s nature and man’s nature are not different in kind. This thesis the sanhedrin would have attacked, on the ground both of divine transcendence and holiness, but in the denial that Jesus was different in kind from other men it would have concurred. But, whereas most moderns who deny the deity of Christ insist that he is superior to most if not all men in degree, the sanhedrin would have questioned the logic of ascribing religious superiority to one who misrepresented himself at the vital point of deity. If he set up a false God, and led multitudes of his followers into the idolatry of creature worship, why laud him?

That, again, is the Christmas Day dilemma—how to avoid sham and deceit on the calendar’s most sacred day, without asserting the full deity of Jesus Christ.

Or take Reinhold Niebuhr’s Gifford Lectures on The Nature and Destiny of Man. Specifically he repudiates the doctrine of the two natures: “All definitions of Christ which affirm both his divinity and humanity in the sense that they ascribe both finite and historically conditioned and eternal and unconditioned qualities to his nature must verge on logical nonsense . . . it is not possible for any person to be historical and unconditioned at the same time.”

Outside the church bells are tolling. The radio hums Christmas carols loved in England, Germany, Russia. Tonight, in a million homes, the last bedtime thoughts will be of the Stranger of Galilee. Among the multitudes, if one looks more closely, he can discern an innumerable sanhedrin, muttering that Christ is guilty of death. Then there are others, who have seen the tomb emptied and have experienced Pentecost; for these, the doctrine of the two natures is the only basis for a consistent Christmas. In that thought structure alone a reverent philosopher can escape a strange unrest on Christmas Day.
The Theology of the Westminster Standards

The Westminster Assembly was wholly British in its composition. It should not, however, be thought that these British divines of the seventeenth century pursued their task and framed the standards of which they were the authors in aloof indifference to the Reformed churches on the continent of Europe. The very task assigned to the Assembly by ordinance of the English Parliament was in terms of the resolution on the part of the Lords and Commons that a government should "be settled in the Church as may be most agreeable to God’s holy word, and most apt to procure and preserve the peace of the Church at home, and nearer agreement with the Church of Scotland, and other Reformed Churches abroad." Dr. S. W. Carruthers in his recent book, The Everyday Work of the Westminster Assembly informs us that as early as November 15, 1643, Alexander Henderson, one of the Scottish commissioners, reminded the divines that the "Continental churches were interestedly watching them, and that it was desirable that they should try to avoid giving offence or prejudice to them" (p. 36). Much evidence might be adduced to show the extent to which the divines at Westminster were acquainted with the best product of Reformed thought in churches outside the British Isles. It can be said in the words of B. B. Warfield that "it belonged to the historical situation of the Westminster Divines that their doctrinal work should take much the form of a consensus of the Reformed theology" (The Westminster Assembly and its Work, p. 159). The Theology of the Westminster Standards then is the Reformed theology.

This rather obvious though necessary characterization of the theology of Westminster is no adequate assessment of the unsurpassed formulation of that theology embodied in these Standards, especially in the Confession and Catechisms. The Reformation of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was peculiarly prolific in the production of Confessions of Faith, as also of Catechisms. It was an age of ardent and polemic faith and the framing of creeds was the natural result. Nearly all of these creeds are notable and valuable exhibitions of Christian truth, and not a few of them are of priceless value. But the Westminster Confession and Catechisms are the last in the series of these great Reformation creeds. The rich repertory of Protestant confessional statement, covering more than a hundred years, was the heritage of the Westminster divines. It not only fell to their lot to compare, to sift and to evaluate in the light of more than a century of faithful and devoted labour on the part of others but it was also their disposition and determination to do so.

Of even greater significance is the fact that no other Protestant or Reformed confession had brought to bear upon its composition such a combination of devotion, care, patience and erudition as was exhibited in the work of the Westminster Assembly.

The Westminster Confession and Catechisms, therefore, are the mature fruit of the whole movement of creed-formation throughout fifteen centuries of Christian history. In particular, they are the crown of the greatest age of confessional exposition, the Protestant Reformation. No other similar documents have concentrated in them, and formulated with such precision, so much of the truth deposited in the Christian revelation.

A System of Truth

A necessary feature of any adequate creedal exhibition of the Christian Faith is coherent and systematic presentation. The attempt to set forth the truth systematically does not imply that the human mind can comprehend the whole counsel of God revealed in the Scriptures nor that all the truth revealed in Scripture can be brought within the compass of any creed framed by men. Such pretension has never been the presupposition of creed-formation either Catholic, Protestant or Reformed. But the great Protestant creeds and especially the Reformed do rest upon the principle that the Scripture revelation is not a series of unrelated and disjointed disclosures of the divine mind and will but an organism characterized by unity and harmony, that the Scripture contains a corpus of truth revealed by God to man that does not alter its character with the changes of human history nor depend for its validity upon the votes of fluctuating human judgment. The divines sitting at Westminster regarded it as their business to elicit from the Scripture the system of truth set forth therein, and this is just saying that they regarded it as their task to exhibit in orderly, logical and systematic fashion the system of truth they found God had deposited in the holy Scripture.
In the first chapter of the Confession they enunciated three principles indispensable to this conception of their task, namely, the unity, sufficiency and finality of Scripture. The unity is expressly stated in Section V in the phrase, “the consent of all the parts” and underlies the statement of Section IX: “The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself: and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture (which is not manifold, but one) it must be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly.” The sufficiency is stated in Section VI: “The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man’s salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men.” And the finality is expressed in Section I when it is said that it pleased the Lord, afterwards, to commit the revelation and declaration of His will “wholly unto writing: which maketh the Holy Scripture to be most necessary; those former ways of God’s revealing His will unto His people being now ceased.”

It would not be proper to claim that no inconsistency whatsoever could be found in the Confession and Catechisms. But any fair examination of these will show that, in the whole range of Christian confessional literature, they are unsurpassed for the closely knit co-ordination of the various chapters and questions and for the finely articulated development and statement of the subjects with which these chapters and questions deal.

An example, perhaps not the most important but in any case characteristic and interesting, will be found in the Confession. It concerns the order of the chapters and the definition of the topics that deal with the application of redemption. The order of the chapters is as follows: Effectual Calling, Justification, Adoption, Sanctification, Faith, Repentance, Good Works, Perseverance, Assurance of Salvation. The theology of the Confession would not have been in the least affected if the order followed had been that of any form of the Ordo Salutis adopted by Reformed theologians. It appears, however, that very good reasons dictated the order of topics actually followed. The Confession deals first with those aspects of the application of redemption which are the actions of God, Effectual Calling, Justification and Adoption as acts of God and Sanctification as a progressive work wrought by the Word and Spirit of God. The remaining five deal particularly with the response of the regenerate spirit of man to the redemption that is in Christ. It is surely significant that the divines gave the priority in the order of statement to those phases which signalize and express the activity of God with reference to and in His people.

The order of the topics, however, evinces another consideration that must have weighed with the divines in this case, a consideration that brings to the forefront their conception of the logical relations that the specific actions of God in the application of redemption sustained to one another and to the other elements of the plan of salvation.

The chapter on Effectual Calling begins thus: “All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, He is pleased in His appointed and accepted time effectually to call, by His Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death, in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ.” Here Effectual Calling is tied to predestination and made rigidly coextensive with it. Predestination is the source of the effectual call, just as the work of Christ is its ground, the Word the means and the Holy Spirit the agent.

The chapter on Justification, following that on Effectual Calling, begins by saying, “Those whom God effectually calleth, He also freely justifieth.” Thus Justification is tied to Effectual Calling and, since Effectual Calling is tied to predestination, Justification is also.

Adoption, the next in the order of topics, is tied to Justification when it is said, “All those that are justified, God vouchsaeth, in and for His only Son Jesus Christ, to make partakers of the grace of adoption.”

Finally, Sanctification is not directly attached to Adoption but to Effectual Calling. “They who are effectually called and regenerated, having a new heart and a new spirit created in them, are further sanctified.” The reason for this break in the sequence, so far as express statement is concerned, is rather apparent. Sanctification has to do with the progressive renewal of man’s subjective condition. The logically prior phase of the application of redemption that stands in the closest and most appropriate relation to subjective sanctification is the creation of the new heart and the new spirit. Since the Confession does not have a separate chapter on regeneration but rather subsumes it under Effectual Calling, it is natural that Sanctification should be brought into collocation, so far as actual definition is concerned, with Effectual Calling rather than with Adoption or Justification. The logical conjuction of all these phases of God’s action is not, however, in the least disturbed. The interlocking is just as securely affirmed by attaching Sanctification to Effectual Calling as by attaching it to Adoption, for Effectual Calling is already conjoined with Justification and Justification with Adoption.

What must be carefully noted is that the order adopted serves to throw into prominent relief the indissoluble coordination of these various phases of the application of redemption and manifests the jealousy the divines had for the consistent application of the principle stated in Chapter VIII, Section VIII, “To all those for whom Christ hath purchased redemption, He doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same.” It also shows their jealousy not only for the water-tight particularism...
of the application of redemption but also for the exhibition of that particularism in the very order and terms of their formulation. In a word, it is evidence that they were careful to express the coextensiveness of predestination, impetration and application.

The Sovereign Pleasure of God

The careful reader of the Westminster Confession will observe the frequency with which the phrase, “it pleased God,” or its equivalent, occurs in the early chapters. It is, as has been said, one of the inextinguishable marks of the Confession and belongs to its fundamental type of doctrine.

The phrase, “it pleased the Lord,” occurs in the first section of the Confession. In dealing with the insufficiency of the light of nature and the works of creation and providence to give that knowledge of God and of His will necessary to salvation the Confession proceeds, “Therefore it pleased the Lord, at sundry times, and in divers manners, to reveal Himself, and to declare that His will unto His Church.” The need for such revelation inheres in the insufficiency of the revelation in nature. But by the phrase, “it pleased the Lord,” the divines are very careful to maintain that the need did not of itself necessitate the revelation. The revelation requisite for salvation finds its source in the sovereign good pleasure of God. It was not inherently necessary for God to meet the need created by man’s sin. It is also to be marked that not only is God’s sovereign good pleasure made to cover the giving of the revelation sufficient unto salvation; it is also made to cover the inscripturation of the revelation. In the structure of the sentence the opening words, “Therefore it pleased the Lord,” govern the clause “to commit the same wholly unto writing” as well as the two preceding clauses coordinate with it.

We thus see at the very outset what stress the divines laid upon the sovereign good pleasure of God in the whole matter of the salvation of lost men. That same principle is consistently maintained and unfolded throughout the ensuing chapters. But the second sentence of the Confession advises us that it is the fundamental premise of the confessional teaching with reference to the plan of salvation.

The decrees of God have to do with God’s design and plan with reference to existence distinct from Himself. It is important to hold that with respect to the conception and plan of things existing distinct from God Himself there was no necessity arising from the nature or perfection of God. That anything is decreed to exist distinct from God, who is of Himself existent and to Himself sufficient, is due to the free, wise and holy counsel of His own will. The Confession begins its exposition of the decree of God with the statement of this truth. “God from all eternity did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely, and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass” (Chap. III, Sect. I).

This sovereign good pleasure of God is thrown into special prominence in the same chapter in sections V and VII. The former reads: “Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to His eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of His will, hath chosen, in Christ, unto everlasting glory, out of His mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving Him thereunto: and all to the praise of His glorious grace.” Section VII deals with the foreordination of men to death and reads: “The rest of mankind God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of His own will, whereby He extendeth or withholdeth mercy, as He pleaseth, for the glory of His sovereign power over His creatures, to pass by; and to ordain them to dishonour and wrath, for their sin, to the praise of His glorious justice.” The emphasis upon the sovereign good pleasure of God is so sustained in both of these sections that no one can miss or mistake it.

As to Reprobation

The latter section, however, merits some consideration, if not elucidation. It is apparent that this section sets forth the two sides of God’s decree with reference to the non-elect of mankind—to pass them by, on the one hand, and to ordain them to dishonour and wrath, for their sin, on the other. Few sections of the Confession manifest greater theological exactness, indeed finesse, than this one. It breaks up the elements contained in the pregnant clause of section III, “and others fore-ordained to everlasting death,” insofar as this clause applies to the non-elect of mankind.

There have been and are those who wish to make the decree of reprobation a purely judicial act of God. This is generally motivated by revulsion from the thought of any sovereign discrimination between men on the part of God. The differences in the ultimate destiny of men are supposed to find their whole explanation in the determinations that arise from men themselves, that in the matter of salvation the differences among men rest upon differences in men themselves. The Westminster divines, on the contrary, show peculiar care to stress the sovereign good pleasure of God in the decree of reprobation as in the decree of election—“God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of His own will, whereby He extendeth or withholdeth mercy, as He pleaseth.”

The insistence upon the absolute sovereignty of God does not, however, obliterate a very important distinction. The decree of reprobation, as we noted, includes two sides, the passing by and the ordaining to dishonour and wrath. It will be observed that the words, “to pass by,” are not in any way modi-
fied, whereas the words, "to ordain them to dishonour and wrath," are modified by the words, "for their sin." The distinction is all-important. The precision of the Confession is masterly. It is not because men are sinners that they are passed by. If that were the case, then all men would be passed by. It is, however, because the non-elect are sinners that they are ordained to dishonour and wrath. To state the matter otherwise, sin is not the ground upon which some are passed by and are therefore non-elect: but sin is the ground of the dishonour and wrath to which they are ordained. The passing by rests upon the sovereign good pleasure of God—He may extend or withhold mercy as He pleases. But dishonour and wrath presuppose ill-desert. Wrath is always the wages of guilt and guilt is the consequence of sin. In other words, dishonour and wrath have always their judicial ground in sin and condemnation.

"God Was Pleased"

The construction of this section, however, requires one further observation. The words, "God was pleased," govern "to ordain them to dishonour and wrath, for their sin" as well as "to pass by." This would seem to perplex the simplicity and force of the distinction noted above, and it has sometimes escaped the notice of some Reformed commentators of the Confession. But again the jealousy with which the divines maintained the principle of God's sovereign will comes to light. The sovereign good pleasure of God is alone operative in the passing by. But in the ordination to dishonour and wrath both the sovereign good pleasure and the judicial condemnation of God are operative. The ground of dishonour and wrath is truly sin and sin alone, but the reason why they, the non-elect, are ordained to such dishonour and wrath, when others equally sinful and hell-deserving are not, is the sovereign will of God. We thus discover that, while the distinction between the ground of passing by and the ground of ordaining to dishonour and wrath is distinctly and eloquently drawn, the sovereign will of God is not denied its proper sphere of operation in the eternal condemnation of the reprobate. And sober analysis of the question will again vindicate the construction that the divines chose to adopt.

There are several other instances of the occurrence of such words as "God was pleased" that are worthy of extended discussion. Space will permit of reference to only one more. It occurs in the chapter on Creation. This chapter begins thus: "It pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for the manifestation of the glory of His eternal power, wisdom, and goodness, in the beginning, to create, or make of nothing, the world, and all things therein whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days; and all very good" (Chap. IV, Sect. I).

The divines were careful to define creation in terms that exclude any notion of prolation or emanation, as also any notion of eternal dualism. Creation consists in the bringing into existence of something that had no existence prior to the creative fiat of God. The phrase, "It pleased God," however, is inserted for the purpose of affirming that the creative act is not inherently necessary for God but rather the expression of His sovereign good pleasure. This principle rests upon God's own self-sufficiency. He is to Himself sufficient as He is of Himself existent. Creation is not necessary to His blessedness, it is not even necessary to fill up the quota of His perfect blessedness. Creation is rather the result of His will to manifest His own glory.

Generic Calvinism

The student of the Westminster Confession and Catechisms will often be amazed at the skill with which propositions dealing with matters of debate among Calvinists have been formulated. The divines were anxious that the formulation of any doctrine should be framed in such a way as to give liberty within the area of tolerated differences of judgment among those holding to the Reformed Faith in its integrity. One of the most interesting examples of this occurs in Chapter III, Section VI, of the Confession.

It is known that there were supralapsarians and infralapsarians in the Assembly. But the Confession does not pin its formulations to either of these peculiarities of persuasion among Calvinists. It might, indeed, appear that the section cited above has adopted an infralapsarian interpretation of the plan of salvation when it says, "Wherefore they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ." That is to say, it might appear that the elect were contemplated as "fallen in Adam" when they were elected to everlasting life. This, however, is a mistaken view of the import of this section.

It is interesting to know that there was considerable debate in the Assembly over this section. Words had been proposed which would have given, to the least, a distinctly supralapsarian bias to the formulation. These words were finally rejected. It does not follow from this, however, that the form actually adopted is infralapsarian or that the divines intended it to be infralapsarian. The words cannot reasonably be construed as implying that the elect of mankind were contemplated by God as fallen when they were elected. The phrase, "being fallen in Adam," is a statement of temporal event just as the phrases that immediately follow, namely, "redeemed by Christ" and "effectually called," denote temporal events. The phrase, "being fallen in Adam" says nothing with respect to the order in which the decree with respect to the fall stood in reference to the decree of election. The purpose is rather to assign the reason why the decree of election necessitates (or, at least, issues in) redemption and the other steps of the saving process. It is be-
cause the elect are fallen in Adam that they need to be redeemed, called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept through faith unto salvation. In this statement of fact both supralapsarians and infralapsarians could happily concur. In words used by George Gillespie in the course of the debate, “every one may enjoy his own sense.”

Conclusion

It is of prime importance that a Reformed creed should guard liberty of interpretation on those questions that are ostensibly matters of dispute among the most orthodox of Reformed thinkers. It is of even greater importance that a Reformed creed should be consistently biblical. The faith God has given to His church cannot receive too accurate and consistent exhibition in the forms of confession and catechism so that they may serve as the symbols of wholehearted devotion to the Word of God, as the means of instruction and edification and as bulwarks against error. Both of these requirements have been admirably fulfilled by the Westminster standards. It is for these reasons that they have performed such signal service in the history of the Reformed church as the instruments of unity and the guardians of orthodoxy. To discard the heritage of the past is the mark of both ignorance and conceit. The way of humility before God and of gratitude to Him is to recognize that other men laboured and we have entered into their labours.

**Things the Bible Does Not Teach About Labor**

In my contacts with believers in various localities I have found that there are many misconceptions regarding Christianity and Labor. In this address I would call your attention to some of these misconceptions. I have therefore written over my address, *Things the Bible does not Teach Regarding Labor.*

* * *

In the first place, THE BIBLE DOES NOT TEACH, that labor is a result of sin.

I need not dwell at length on this first point, since the error here lies almost on the surface. But there are some believers who seem to think that work is very definitely the result of sin. The Bible gives no support to this misconception, but teaches the very opposite. Note that man worked before he fell into sin, and not only after the fall. In Gen. 2:15 we read that God placed Adam in the Garden of Eden “to dress it and to keep it.” In the state of perfection man therefore had to work. As God’s caretaker and representative on earth it was Adam’s privilege to work in Paradise.

Inasmuch as labor is not a result of sin the Bible designates it as one of the manifold works of God, and as a product of divine wisdom (Ps. 104:23, 24). Moreover, the Bible very definitely condemns laziness and unwarranted idleness. (Prov. 10:4; 21:25; 24:30-34; II Thess. 3:10-12.)

It should be remembered in this connection that productive labor would be out of the question for man. Man can think God’s thoughts after Him and produce because he is made after God Himself. Productive labor is therefore the fruit of man’s creation after God’s image, and is not the result of sin.

In full harmony with the foregoing we find that expert craftsmen such as Bezalel and Oholiab were excellent in plying their trade because they were filled with the Spirit of God. (Ex. 31:1-9.) If anyone would suggest that this special qualification by the Spirit of God came to these craftsmen by way of exception, and because they were to produce certain material for the tabernacle, then we would call attention to the fact the Bible elsewhere tells us that God instructs the farmer, teaching him how to prepare the soil for the seed. (Isaiah 28:26.)

No, labor is not the result of sin. It is clothed with a God given dignity and occupies a very honorable place in God’s universe. Wearisome, burdensome work is indeed a result of sin (Gen. 3:17-19), but work as such is a blessing, and not a curse.

* * *

In the second place, note that THE BIBLE DOES NOT TEACH that social security legislation is wrong.

Under social security legislation we include laws providing for old age pension, unemployment insurance, sick relief, etc. Some Christians have condemned legislation of this kind, saying it is socialistic and unbiblical. With this position we need not agree. God Himself enacted legislation for Israel which aimed at Israel’s social security. For the
poor, dependent worker God ordained that his wages had to be paid to him at the end of each day (Lev. 19:13). Articles of clothing taken to pledge during the day had to be restored to the owner before nightfall so that he might be able to protect himself during the chill of the night. (Ex. 22:26, 27.) No Israelite was allowed to take his neighbor's millstone to pledge. (Deut. 24:6.) The corners of the grain field and the gleanings of the vineyards were for the poor and for the sojourners. The rightful owner might not harvest these. God reserved these for the two classes indicated. (Lev. 19:9, 10.)

Every fiftieth year all the land returned automatically to its original owners or their rightful heirs. By the enactment of the year of Jubilee God specifically counter-acted extreme poverty and extreme wealth. God sought for economic stability and balance and decreed that the land should not be sold in perpetuity. (Lev. 25:23-28.) And Mal. 3:5 and James 5:1-6 make it very plain that God hates social oppression and gross inequality.

In the third place THE BIBLE DOES NOT TEACH that communal ownership and cooperative living are wrong.

Many believers seem to think that the practice of communal ownership is always wrong and unbiblical. Nothing could be further from the truth. In Acts 2 and 3 we have the record of a form of communism which had the full approval of God and which was an outgrowth of a great spiritual awakening and of the founding of the New Testament Church. Thus we read, “And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man had need.” (Acts 2:44, 45.) And again, “And not one of them said that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.” (Acts 3:32.)

It should be noted that this early Christian communism was entirely voluntary and not compulsory. (cf. Acts 5:4.) It may also be said that this communism at Jerusalem was doubtlessly too ideal for this sinful dispensation to continue for a long period of time. It was born of great spiritual fervor. As soon as life settled back into its ordinary course this beautiful bit of Christian Communism seemingly disappeared from the scene. But this biblical account ought to tell us definitely that communal ownership in itself is not condemned of God, but approved of Him. Let it be stated in this connection that we as Christians object to Russian Communism and should object to it, not because Communism in itself is wrong and antichristian, but because of the Godlessness of Russian Communism, its antichristian spirit and practise, and because of its compulsory character, making private ownership illegal. Our objections to Russian Communism are very severe. But let us also admit that cooperative organizations for buying and selling, and communal ownership of transportation systems, power plants, etc., may have to become much more common than they are today.

In the fourth place, there are a few Christians who seem to think that labor unions are wrong and unscriptural.

I Peter 2:18 has often been quoted in condemnation of unionism. But obviously, no appeal can be made to I Peter 2:18. This passage clearly refers to the institution of slavery! Christian slaves were bidden to subject themselves to their rightful owners. The principles of Christianity demanded the eradication of that pagan institution. But as long as slavery had not been set aside by regular process of law, the slave owner had certain rights. These rights the slaves were required to respect. That is the point of I Peter 2:18. This text in no way limits the liberty of men who are free in God’s good providence. Every employer has his rights. But so has every employee. The one must respect the God-given rights of the other. And may we not claim that Christ in Matt. 20:6 virtually recognizes the working man his right to bargain with those in need of laborers? The men of Christ’s parable “agreed” to work for a definitely stipulated sum. Now the right to make an agreement presupposes the right to bargain.

As believers we should readily grant that labor unions are demanded by the unrighteousness and greed of many employers, and that labor unions are needed for the protection of the rights of the laboring man.

But let every industrial and business organization (Labor Unions, Manufacturing Associations, Chambers of Commerce, etc.) remember the admonition of II Cor. 6:14-18. Any organization which is unchristian in principle or practise, or both, by that fact bars its doors to conscientious and consistent Christians. Would to God that our Christian organizations were stronger! Let us support them whole-heartedly. God bless the C.L.A. and kindred organizations!

(The above article is the gist of a Labor Day address delivered for the Christian Labor Association at its open air meeting at Grand Rapids, Michigan, Sept. 5, 1943.—Eorror.)
A BOUT what percentage of students at a large state university subscribe to an evolutionary theory of origins? What percentage of students believe in the biblical account of origins? Are the convictions of university students as to origins based on reflective thinking or have they taken for granted the indoctrination of parents, teachers, textbooks?

With these questions in mind the writer took a poll of a group of 55 of his students in a course in Principles of Sociology at the University of Michigan. Although mainly a sophomore course, the class had also a sprinkling of freshmen, juniors and seniors. Virtually all of the students revealed that they had been taught the evolutionary theory of origins in high school and college, in fact, several were under the impression that this explanation of beginnings was no longer a theory but was now considered a law.

Although the survey covered only a small percentage of the total enrollment the results would have a high predictive value for the student group as a whole since the 55 students were a cross section as to age, race, nationality and denominational affiliation. An earlier survey of church membership revealed that 14 denominations were represented as follows: Jewish 11, Episcopalian 7, Catholic 7, Methodist 7, Presbyterian 5, Baptist 2, and one each from Congregational, Russian Orthodox, Reformed, Greek Orthodox, Christian Reformed, Fundamental Baptist, Protestant Lutheran and Christian Science. Eight were not affiliated with any church. Students represented 14 states and the Philippine Islands.

Procedure of the Survey

The following procedure was followed in conducting the survey. In connection with a unit on cultural origins the students were asked to read, in addition to the textbook references, the creation account in Genesis I. Needless to say the sociology textbooks, as those in most other fields, presented the evolutionary account as the only explanation of origins, never mentioning even the possibility of another explanation. At the next class session, and prior to lectures on the subject, the students were asked to designate on a sheet of paper which of the two accounts they were inclined to favor and a brief statement as to the reason for their choice. Since a candid opinion was sought the students were not asked to sign their names, although some by preference did.

The results of the survey showed that 27 favored an evolutionary explanation of some kind, 23 were inclined toward the creation account and 5 were undecided or saw no conflict between the two. Stated in percentages, 49.1% favored evolution, 41.9% favored creation and 9% were uncertain. It is emphasized that these figures reveal nothing as to the quality of the convictions held by the students in the three groups, but are mere quantifications. Only an examination of the reasons given for the preferences will give a clue as to their relative strength. This will be done subsequently.

The investigation was carried one step further. Two lectures were given in which the supportive data for the evolutionary theories were evaluated. Abortive attempts at proving the "link" between man and lower forms, such as the Hesperopithecus Haroldcookii, were examined as well as first-hand accounts of the findings in connection with the Pithecanthropus Man and the Pithecanthropus Erectus (Trinil or Java Ape Man), still cited as evidence of man's origin. Indoctrination was carefully avoided in these lectures, the aim being rather informative. It was clear from study that the "vast amounts" of supportive data for the evolutionary theory of origins actually amounted to about a bushel basket of fossil remains over which archeologists and natural scientists have constantly bickered. The one conclusion drawn was that, far from being a rational system, the various evolutionary theories also demanded a large amount of faith—in human investigation and interpretation rather than divine revelation. It was also suggested that an additional advantage of the acceptance of the creation theory was that it offered a foundation for a philosophy of life, something that could only rashly be claimed for the evolutionary accounts.

After these two lectures the previous poll was repeated. Again the students were asked anonymously to give their preference and a brief statement as to the reason. The results now showed that the number favoring the creation theory had risen from 23 to 36 for a percentage of 65.5. Those who
preferred evolutionary explanations dropped from 27 to 14 for a percentage of 25.5. Again 5 were undecided. These qualifications, although meaningful, do not assume full stature until they are viewed along with the reasons given as will subsequently be done.

Why?—
Pro and Con

Let us now observe some of the reasons given by students for their preferences in the first poll.

A. Why I Believe in Evolution.

"I believe in evolution because I don't believe in predestination. Evolution to me means that man doesn't have to remain in the circumstances he finds himself in at birth."

"I do not believe in creation since I do not want to rely on divine revelation."

"I favor evolution because to me it seems more logical. The creation theory is simply a folk-tale passed down through the ages."

"I believe in evolution because of the similarity observable between man and ape. In addition, I am not at all convinced that God had the power to create. We formerly thought that God alone controlled our lives but medicine and science have shown us that they play a major part."

"I asked my minister what he thought and he said he believed in the evolution of man from lower forms."

"If man were created by God why does he have an appendix and other vestigial organs?"

"After rereading Genesis I, I favor the Darwinian theory of evolution all the more. I believe that the Bible was written figuratively."

"After reading the two accounts of origins I am inclined to favor evolution since there is much more historical proof."

"In favoring the evolution theory I have not lost sight of the fact that it is not based on substantiating evidence. However, in the near or distant future I believe that it will be substantiated."

"I believe completely in the scientific explanation of the origin of man. This opinion is based on one year of zoology and frequent visits to one of the large museums which presents a very clear and logical picture of how evolution came about. If God created man why do we find so many misfits—children born imbecilic or hopelessly deformed? Science explains these phenomena."

"After having had so many years of schooling one comes to depend on human investigated facts only."

"As a very young child I was of course taught that Adam and Eve were the beginning of mankind. However, at about the age of 12 I came into contact with an elderly gentleman who was firmly against this theory. We had many talks and I began reading a little about evolution and finally I took a course in sociology in high school."

"It is certainly true that scientists and archeologists have found proof of man's evolution from prehistoric forms. However, there has been no proof of creation as yet. It may be wrong not to believe in creation, but I like proof for the things in which I believe."

"I have read scientific presentations of this subject and they make me wonder just how the Bible theory can hold its ground. The Bible theory to me is a pretty way to tell a complicated story to man."

"Ever since the 9th grade in high school when I took a course in geology I have believed in the theory of evolution. There is perfectly logical evidence supporting it whereas the Biblical theory is based purely on the conjecture of men who lived thousands of years ago."

"Up to the present time I've given the matter very little thought. In school we were just told of evolution and that seemed to be all there was to it."

"I favor Darwin's theory and I have given the matter serious thought. One reason for this decision is my disdain for those people who have blindly accepted the Bible theory. Any intelligent person should do a little debating on the theories in the Bible. A course in philosophy my roommate took revealed that the Bible was not written until 300 years after the death of Christ. Certainly in that period of time some facts might be distorted or even exaggerated."

"I believe in evolution because of the vast amount of evidence. Let me add that this does not in the least make me any the less religious."

B. Why I Believe in the Creation Theory

"This world has its origin in creation, not evolution. There is a spiritual power with us always. We have been given a chance to live a free, peaceful, righteous life. We have not taken the chance. We are being punished by him who has created. We pray for mercy for we certainly have ruined a culture that could be fine."

"I believe in creation possibly because I am too conceited to believe that I am descended from an ape. My environment has also influenced my belief. I don't know a more intelligent man than my father and his belief is almost sufficient for me. I also think of what one of my teachers in the grades told me. He said that it would take just as great a miracle to have the right proportions of certain elements come together to make the first life as it would for God to create the universe and the latter is a much more comforting idea."

"Evolution has never proven where the first element came from."

"The reason I favor the creation theory is because I was brought up very staunchly believing in it. The evolutionists do not have any facts that can con-
vince me otherwise. I will continue to believe the Bible theory is true until—not another theory comes along—but the Bible theory is proven false.” (The author of the foregoing is a Catholic.)

“What could be more real and logical than that which you find in the Bible. It may not have been proven, but everyone knows that what is written in the Bible cannot be questioned.” (The author of this statement is a Catholic and a member of one of the leading families in the Philippines who came to this country in 1940 and expects to do social work in the Islands after the war.)

“The rhythm and harmony in nature show us that there is a God who created us and helps us to lead better and happier lives.” (The author is an Episcopalian.)

“I believe in creation because I have been brought up that way and have never had any proof or reason to change my mind. Further, if evolution were true we should still be changing into other forms.”

“One of the reasons I believe in creation theory is that I am too conceited to believe that another form of life superior to man will exist.”

“All my life I’ve been led to blind belief in the theory of creation. My reading so far has not altered my belief. However, a high school teacher once said that the farther a person goes in the study of evolution the closer he will come to the theory of creation. All belief in God seems to be shaken when I become confused between the two theories. It seems as though the more I try to use reasoning the less faith I have. The people who blindly accept Genesis I probably enjoy a feeling of security, I can’t do that any longer. I am as open to the theory of evolution as anyone. It may be that before this week is over I will have changed my belief. God couldn’t have granted us reasoning power without expecting us to use it.”

“In all my experiences in life I have been convinced that God is working to help me and I’m definitely a fatalist, probably because I was reared that way. I realize how important the role of science is in this world but it is subordinate to the Higher Power. Medical science is important but I don’t believe it ever saved a person’s life if he was fated to die.” (Author is of the Jewish faith.)

“My belief in creation is the result of years of training in the Christian Science church and Sunday School. It has been bred into me so thoroughly for so long that I believe it implicitly, finding it impossible to conceive of another mode of origins.”

“I have believed in creation because my parents believed in it. Now in comparing the two theories I am inclined to think they do not contradict each other. However, I still believe in the theological theory.”

“I, being but a minute group of cells living on the earth for but a fraction of a time, have no reason or right to doubt Gen. 1:1.”

“I favor creation against my better judgment. Evolution is more plausible but it adds too much substance to my already strong religious skepticism. You see, I favor the theological theory merely because I want to.”

“I know the theory of creation is true, although two years ago I believed in evolution. First I was saved in Jesus Christ, then being in fellowship with God, He brought me to see that the Bible is true from start to finish. Study of His Word shows that divine revelation has never been proven wrong; human ideas have often been proven wrong. The Bible story is very, very probable and not fantastic in the least. Our minds are not big enough to understand it, but God says, “My thoughts are above your thoughts.” Every day I see more and more of His handiwork. That evolution and creation cannot be harmonized is proven from Genesis I where repeatedly are found the words “after its kind,” and not after some lower form. The creation theory is rational if one accepts this on faith in God, and His Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ.” (Author is a Fundamental Baptist.)

The Second Poll

The following are excerpts of some of the more pertinent reasons given for preferences in the second poll, following two lectures on the examination of the proof of evolution.

A. Why I Still Believe in Evolution

“Perhaps if we spent more time discussing the question I would change my opinion, but having thought one way for so long makes it hard to change.”

“I still favor evolution although my belief is not as strong as it was the other day.”

“I still favor the theory of evolution, but I am not on such steady ground as formerly. Since coming to the University I had forgotten the creation theory entirely. I appreciate having it brought home to me again.”

“Because I do not have the required faith to believe in creation.”

“I am more mixed up than ever. Evolution is true, but creation seems to have some part in it.”

“More evidence will be found to substantiate the evolution theory. Just as the growth of civilization was a slow process, so too, the unraveling of the yarn woven around it may take a great deal of time.”

“If a supernatural created the earth he himself must have been created by a series of chemical changes.”

B. Why I Still (or Now) Believe in Creation

“First I favored the evolution theory due mainly to my ignorance. I still can’t understand the creation theory, but favor it. Personally, I’m confused.”

“I did not realize the small amount of proof the evolution theory had.”
"First I thought the two theories could be harmonized. Now that I see they are contradictory I favor creation."

"I simply do not know what to believe now. I was so sure of evolution before I heard the facts, but now I favor the biblical theory since it also gives one a philosophy of life. Also, there is more in evolution that has been disproved than in theology."

"Since neither is 'provable' I favor creation since by believing this I derive more satisfaction and have more to live up to."

"My belief in creation has been strengthened because where reasoning formerly tended to turn my belief away from creation, reasoning now seems to tear down the evolutionist's proof."

"My faith has been strengthened by evidence disproving evolution. I feel this will be very helpful to me in trying to lead others to Christ, for the evolution theory is one thing that is a sore spot to those who would believe in the Bible." (Fundamental Baptist.)

"There is a definite change in my opinion which before favored evolution. However, my previous decision didn't have much basis and during this week's study facts have been presented which have swayed my view."

"Tuesday I favored the creation theory although I thought at the time I was being very irrational and unscientific because I thought then that there was a wealth of evidence supporting the evolution theory. Thanks to you, now my creation belief is strengthened." (Author is a Catholic Negro from Detroit, son of the owner of Heavyweight Champion Joe Louis.)

"The thought that the One who created us still watches over us strengthened my belief."

C. Why I Still (or Now) am Undecided

"Frankly, now I don't know which to believe. I have been brought up on the creation theory, but have learned to favor evolution."

"My 'faith' in evolution has been considerably shaken by learning of the small amount of real evidence there is. However, one does not build 'faith' in the creation theory in a week, so I am now left in a state of uncertainty."

"I had always believed in Lamarck's theory but now I see that even the evolutionists disagree on evolution. I think I shall be an agnostic."

**Some Apparent Conclusions**

There are some quite apparent conclusions which can be drawn from the data of this investigation. First, it is obvious that some of those who formerly held to the creation account have been strengthened in that faith. Second, there has been an actual change in viewpoint of at least 13 students of the 55. Some changed from indecision to an inclination toward the creation theory. Others entirely changed their opinions and turned from evolution to the creation account. Still others who favored the evolutionary theories became indecisive, holding to both or neither.

Third, there was an evident weakening of the "conviction" of those who still tended to favor the evolution accounts.

Fourth, the effect of early home, school and social contacts on the thinking of students is evident especially in the summary of reasons given in the first poll.

Fifth, a large amount of evolutionary belief stems from a failure of modern education to present a complete picture to the student. Today the evolutionary theories of origins are taken for granted in the large majority of textbooks and the alternative explanation is not even mentioned. Older editions of textbooks at least alluded to the creation theory, or "myth" as it was often called, albeit usually in a deprecating fashion. This partial and partisan portrayal is unfair to the student, regardless of his predilections in the matter. It is unfair, in the first place, because by presenting only one theory, and giving questionable supportive data for that, the student is led to believe that that is the only explanation—and since that is the only one, it must be the correct one.

It is unfair to the student, in the second place, because it reveals a lack of objectivity. Because of the author's preconception he intentionally avoids reference to the creation theory. Regardless of personal preference, the fact that a percentage, and a significant one as it revealed from the results of the first poll mentioned above, of the American people believes in the creation theory is warrant enough to refer to it as an alternative explanation.

Presenting a complete picture, considering all theories that have not definitely been disproven is the real test of scientific objectivity. But, in their attempt to be ultra-scientific, many modern writers of textbooks have fallen into the very pit they were so diligently attempting to avoid and have been unscientific in their presentation!
We are pleased to have received a variety of reader reaction to our editorials this past month. That is encouraging for an editor, even if some of the writers strongly disagree. Contrary to the expectation expressed by some of our readers in these letters, we would like to assure them that we are not at all “offended” by this frank expression of opinion. We wish we had more of it. The editor believes in fearless speaking, and he surely accords that privilege to anyone who differs with him.

ON “WILSON AND ROOSEVELT VINDICATED”

From a New Mexican Reader:

“I wish to register my protest against the language used by C. B. in his article “Wilson and Roosevelt” in recent CALVIN FORUM.”

From a Grand Rapids Dentist:

“Do you know that I have been under the impression—or, rather, delusion—that you were against the World Court and the League of Nations. I cannot tell when and where I formed this opinion. It is quite possible that I deduced it from the position Dr. Kuyper has so long maintained. I am happy to note that I was wrong.

“For a long time I imagined myself about the only one in this neck of the woods who argued for our adherence to both, but especially to the Court. We are gaining ground now, but we must be on the alert. Contrary to what General Smuts said, the old order is not dead yet.”

This from a Chicago layman (we copy the statement unaltered):

“I take it that you are well aware of the fact that by supporting the Marxistic NEW DEAL in its hidden aim to control the world and church through and by its sinister INTERNATIONALISM, you are helping to cause your own brethren to be destroyed, to be ruined by the League of Nations. I am happy to note that I was wrong.

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This from a minister in New Jersey:

“I do not object to any editor stating the facts and ‘calling a spade a spade’. But you go far beyond that. I am referring especially to your editorial in the December, 1943, issue, entitled ‘Wilson and Roosevelt Vindicated’.

“You see fit to make mention of The Banner in this editorial and the ideas expressed by its editor. You have, of course, a perfect right to that. However, you are placing ‘cheap partisanism’, ‘blind isolationism’, the Chicago Tribune, the ‘sanctimonious talk and pious twaddle’, and The Banner and its editor in the same bed, by discussing all these in the same editorial and neglecting to make due distinction. Moreover, you cap it all by your last paragraph in ascribing ‘hypocritical drone’ to politicians and ‘the Calvinistic press.’ This ‘Calvinistic press’ must be The Banner, since that is the only Calvinistic paper you mention in the editorial. You may not have intended to create such impressions, but I want to assure you that editorial does make such impressions. This manner of treating one’s opponent is not brotherly. Moreover, when you ascribe a ‘hypocritical drone’ to the ‘Calvinistic press’ I think your zeal for your own ideas carries you too far, so that you ascribe such things even to your brother. It seems to me that you should either prove this contention or withdraw it, and do this publicly in the same columns in which the statements were made. I do hope that you will do either the one or the other, for unless this element is removed you have injected a spirit in the controversy which augurs nothing but division and enmity, whereas we of all men should be able to discuss our differences in an amicable way.

Perhaps I am exposing myself to you by writing these things, so that this letter will also receive an epithet which is none too complimentary. But at any rate, my conscience is clear and I do hope better things of you.

In addition permit me to state that though I agree with you as to the necessity of a league of nations, I am very sure that it is not such a great calamity that the League established at the close of the war failed, at least to an extent. Don’t blame Lodge and isolationism so much for the failure of the League, but blame France especially. The French delegation at the peace conference yielded to the statesmen insisting upon a league all the way along, until the establishment of an international police force was discussed. Then they became adamant in their resistance, knowing full well that no league would ever be effective without the strong arm of the law. France is suffering because of that sin today. Moreover, you call Wilson a ‘hypocritical drone’ in its hidden aim to control the world and church through and by its sinister INTERNATIONALISM, you are helping to cause your own brethren to be destroyed, to be ruined by the League of Nations. I am happy to note that I was wrong.

“For a long time I imagined myself about the only one in this neck of the woods who argued for our adherence to both, but especially to the Court. We are gaining ground now, but we must be on the alert. Contrary to what General Smuts said, the old order is not dead yet.”

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From Our Correspondents

CALVINISM AND THE FORUM

Dear Dr. Bouma:

The year 1943 is drawing to its close and it is good for us at the end of this fateful period to reflect and think of the past because this is the only way in which we can look to the future with a clear vision.

I do not want to speak of the war this time, neither about international relations, however important they may be, but in this letter I do want to try to express a thought about Calvinism and THE FORUM.

When reading the reports about the attitudes of the Christian Churches in general and the Protestant Church in particular, one cannot help feeling thankful to God for belonging to that mighty army of Calvinists, who through all the ages since John Calvin called them to battle, have been and still are the Millitia Christi.

I do not want to underestimate the courage of the Church of Norway, nor the heroism of Pastor Niemoller and his men in Germany, but the fact remains that precisely the countries in which Calvinism has set its mark on the character of the people are the ones to carry on the struggle against the dark spirit of National-Socialism and Fascism.

What is the explanation that the Nazis find their chief opponents in the Netherlands in the Reformed Churches? Why was it that Britain stood up to the terrible onslaught of a ruthless foe and never lost faith in the final outcome of the struggle?

How did it come about that the United States felt right from the beginning that help on an increasing scale to the last stronghold in Europe was needed and freely given, not counting the cost?

Is not the answer to be found in the tremendous power radiating from the Calvinistic Philosophy of Life into the spiritual life of the people.

Even those who do not profess it, have experienced the great and deep reflections of Calvinism in their own way of faith and life.

I would in this connection define it as follows:

Calvinism is the closest approach to the true view of the relationship between God and His creation.

Or to say it in other words: Calvinism has through its emphasis on the Glory of God, placed all creatures in their true perspective and in their true relationship to their Creator.

The implications of this definition are of tremendous importance to the world of today. It means that the only hope for the future lies in the recognition of the sovereignty of God over His creation and consequently the obedience to His commandments.

The obedience to the commandments of God, the return to His Word are the prime conditions for a harmonious life of society, national and international.

It is not the slogan, "Live and let live," but the commandment of Christ, "Love thy neighbour" that ought to be the basis for all international relationships.

It seems so easy and simple, but in a world turned away from God it will be the most difficult task to perform.

Love thy neighbour! How can I with my friends killed or in prison and my house in ruins?

It does not mean that no justice should be done and no punishment should be meted out. On the contrary, real justice is an act of love.

But it does mean that once justice is done, there should follow forgiveness and not revenge.

That is why the Calvinists of the world have such a high calling and a great responsibility.

They will have to continue their witness in times of war and peace: Soli Deo Gloria!

Holding aloft this witness I consider the real value of THE FORUM.

There will be a great future for THE FORUM because there still is a great future for Calvinism.

If the distribution is properly organized on a world-wide scale and the cooperation is secured of learned Calvinists in the various spheres of life, there is no reason to be doubtful about the outcome.

We have a great heritage, but above all a great message! It is the message of the newborn King.

Christ avant tous!

London, England
December 11, 1943.

CHR. DE WIT.

THE CALVINISTIC STUDY CLUB

December 17, 1943, the Calvinistic Study Club met once more. This time the members gathered at the home of Professor Clarence Bouma. War has made its impact on our Club as it has done on all other things. Dr. H. J. Stob is no longer with us since he has donned the uniform of Uncle Sam's Naval branch of the Armed Forces. The work he does at Columbia University should give him a wide purview of his chosen field. We feel quite confident that our Club will greatly benefit later on by Dr. Stob's experience.

The Club has entered upon a new program of studies: The general subject is, "Studies in the Character of the New Dispensation." Here are the titles of a few of these studies: The Unique Significance of Pentecost. (This subject was presented in an able manner and interesting fashion by the Rev. J. Weidenaar at our Fall meeting.) Ecumenicity and Denominationalism; Church and State in the Light of the New Testa-

At our December meeting Dr. Clarence Bouma wielded the presidential gavel, and Professor Thomas E. Welmers read his paper on "Article 36 of the Belgic Confession." Professor Welmers gave a digest of the present-day controversy regarding Article 36. This controversy at first blush seems to be a mere academic question. But a bit of reflection convinces one very quickly that there really is involved a tremendous spiritual aspect. If the Article is to reflect only the thought of the Fathers of Dordt the controversy would be purely academic. However, since the Belgic Confession is one of the standards of the Church today, here and now, the question is what did the Fathers mean and what do they mean by the statements of Article 36? If we change the wording of the Article,—that part which speaks of the duty of Magistrates, such as protection of the sacred ministry, prevention and removal of idolatry, etc., etc., do we tone down the meaning of the Article—and in doing so, tone down our Confession?

Is the antithesis of which the Article speaks (kingdom of Christ and kingdom of antichrist) an absolute antithesis? Does the Article intend to speak for the government? Does it give a statement on political science and the principles of statecraft? If the Fathers stated their faith correctly at that time, and we state our position of faith today differently, what has changed? Our views? Our faith? Or the Word of God? And the intensely practical question which emerges is: Is spiritual life as high, is insight in the Word of God as profound, is the stimulus to confess faith over against the world, today the same as it was in the days when men and women were purified in the flames of persecution, when spiritual power was at its zenith, when confessions were born, hundreds of hymns made, Ritual devised and Church government systematically developed?

After the reading of the paper a goodly number of these questions posed above came into discussion. Naturally, this discussion was interesting, and thought-provoking. Did we find a solution? No. Nor will any one ever. For the simple reason that no matter what we confess concerning the duties of the State as taught by the Bible, the State and the powers that be are instituted by God because of man's sin. The State will never be in this present dispensation wholly composed of reborn men and women. There always will be a discrepancy. Until the present dispensation ends in a cataclysm destroying the kingdom of antichrist and ushering in the new heaven and the new earth, we will have to keep on confessing that the magistrates may not use the sword to exterminate the kingdom of Christ, but that the Power who ordained powers to wield the sword must acknowledge their source and defend it. Doing this the powers that be will maintain themselves. When the Kingdom of Christ is fully established we have no longer any need for a confession.

Our next meeting will be held the third Friday in April at the home of Professor Welmers in Holland, Mich. Dr. J. T. Hoogstra will then read a paper on "Ecumenicity and Denominationalism". J. G. Van Dyke.

Grand Rapids, Mich.

EASTERN NEWS LETTER

Dr. Clarence Bouma, Editor
THE CALVIN FORUM
Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Dear Dr. Bouma:

Some people no doubt find it hard to believe that folk who indulge in things philosophical can have a really good time. Generally the meeting of a philosophical group is pictured as a vaporous confab between Dr. Dryasdust and Mr. Moldy.

This popular misapprehension to the contrary notwithstanding, the Calvinistic Philosophy Club did have a delightful time at its regular Fall meeting held on November 8 at Westminster Theological Seminary.

The well-attended session was led in a most stimulating fashion by the Rev. William Young of New York City. Mr. Young set forth in cogent form the basic thinking of St. Augustine of converting his metaphysics (theory of reality) and his epistemology (theory of knowledge). This paper was a continuation of the material presented at the meeting of last spring, when Mr. Young gave a thorough analysis of Augustinian philosophical writings. As indicated in the report on that meeting, Mr. Young is a candidate for the doctorate at Union Theological Seminary of New York.

The Priority of Ontology

Perhaps the most instructive aspects of the lively discussion centered around two seminal issues. The first centers around the problem of the relative priority of ontology or epistemology in the thought structure. The question can be more simply stated as follows: Shall the thinker begin with the reality that is the object of knowledge, or shall he begin by reflecting on the means by which he can know any reality? Since Descartes modern thinkers have largely done the latter. This mode of thinking is especially clear in the work of Immanuel Kant, who taught that the mind of man created the world of things by the use of certain forms of thought (categories) that are in the mind. The stamp of Kant is upon all of modern subjectivistic, psychologistic modes of thought.

Mr. Young pointed out quite effectively that the Christian, along with Augustine, must always begin with the reality of God and with man as his creature. Especially interesting here is the use that Augustine made of Plato's doctrine of the Ideas. Plato's Ideas, which are supposed to be the original, archetypal forms of all things that exist, have been justly criticized as being only abstractions from the world of sense. Augustine placed the archetypes of all things, the Ideas, in the mind of God. And as such they participate in the character of God as described by His Attributes. The conclusion is clear: really to know anything man must first of all know God and his glorious counsel.

Modern thought places the Ideas in the mind of man, under the tutelage of Descartes and Kant particularly. The German philosopher Richard Kroner has, with others, detected a trend here, and has taught that the history of philosophy can be divided into three periods—cosmological (Greek thought), theological (Medieval thought), and anthropological (Modern thought). He also taught that the theological period was but a time of transition between the other two periods. Mr. Young pointed out that it is hardly a mere transition, for St. Augustine's thought is quite unique in that it is based on divine revelation, and is not, like the others, a reflection starting with man's experience of things in the world about him. In this discussion the fact was also brought out that certain modern thinkers have heralded a return to the priority of metaphysical considerations in the construction of the temple of knowledge. The following were mentioned in this connection: Heidegger (author of Sein und Zeit), Nicolai Hartmann, and Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven. It was clear that Mr. Young had first-hand knowledge of the works of these men.

This is a most fruitful area of reflection, and one that is not so far removed from the practical matters of the world as might at first appear. One could profitably do some thinking on the following question: Is not the failure to relate man's thinking to some Reality independent of our reflection at the bottom of the casuistical mode of thinking so characteristic of modern humanistic liberalism in religion, statecraft and law? A study of some of the opinions of Justice Felix Frankfurter of the United States Supreme Court shows what a brilliant mind can do when it is attached to no reality transcending its own brilliance and the objective of human beneficence. Is not most of
the subjectivistic waywardness of modern religion and thought, of the individualistic anarchy in morals, and the unbecomingestated jab-and-stab method in statecraft due basically to modern man's practice of beginning with the thinking, active or feeling self? Must we Christian theists not proclaim as we stand on the shoulders of Augustine that the only escape from such fragmentariness in religion and life is to see to it that we orient all of our life and thought around the independent, prior reality of the absolute God and within the spacious framework of his whole and glorious counsel?

The Privative Character of Evil

The second problem of real moment aired in the discussion has to do with Augustine's notion of the privative character of evil. The members of the club listened with avid interest to a paper by young Dr. C. V. van Til on this point. It was suggested that if we adopt any view of evil which describes it as the negation or privation of being, we are thereby mixing metaphysical and ethical categories, and are therefore in danger of falling into Manichean ways of thinking. Furthermore, it was argued that the metaphysical situation has not changed. Though man is now a sinner before God, he is still the image-bearer of God. No diminution in being, in man's status as creature before God, can ever palliate the awfulness of man's ethical situation before God, and can ever minimize man's moral responsibility to his Creator.

Thus the members were treated to a thorough, scholarly and objective presentation of the subject. Always the leader of the discussion referred back to the sources, and at all times was most careful to point out what was Augustine's language and argument in distinction from his own or another's. He illuminated the discussion by apt references to the literature of philosophy and theology, past and present, German, Dutch, French and English. Here we also had a good working illustration of the fact that the problems of philosophy are "persistent", to use Calkins' term, and that whenever one touches the history of philosophy at any significant point, he is opening up problems that bristle all along the noetic front. The Club certainly has been made Mr. Young's debtor. We shall look forward to the publication of the Proceedings of 1943.

The Westminster Theological Journal

Quite frequently I meet men of Reformed persuasion who are not readers of The Westminster Theological Journal. That to me seems regrettable. This is the only scientific theological journal of America with a definite Calvinistic stamp. The November 1943 issue contains two leading articles. The first is by John H. Skilton of the faculty of Westminster Seminary to me seems regrettable. This is the only scientific theological journal of America with a definite Calvinistic stamp. The November 1943 issue contains two leading articles. The first is by John H. Skilton of the faculty of Westminster Seminary. The second is by Dr. W. Stanford Reid of Canada on Science, Religion and the Future; The Word of God and the Reformed Faith; Philosophy; Redemption and Revelation. The book review section is a veritable course and critique of modern theology, yes, of contemporary theology. Some of the books reviewed are: Fosdick, On Being a Real Person; Kroener, How Do We Know God?; Kroener, The Primacy of Faith; Runes, Twentieth Century Philosophy; Cartridge, A Conservative Introduction to the Old Testament; Haven, Science, Religion and the Future; The Word of God and the Reformed Faith; Joad, God and Evil; Klauser, From Jesus to Paul; Robinson, Redemption and Revelation. Certainly, Dr. Bouma, you will pardon me for putting in this "plug" for so commendable an effort that is distinctly Reformed. He who would be contemporaneously Reformed should read this journal.

Cordially yours,

EDWARD HEBERMA.

SOUTHERN REGIONAL CALVINISTIC CONFERENCE

A SOUTHERN REGIONAL CALVINISTIC CONFERENCE has been scheduled to meet in Jackson, Mississippi, on February 21 and 22, 1944, which will be of great interest to all Presbyterians, as well as all others of Calvinistic faith.

The Conference theme, "The Challenge of Calvinism in Our Day," will be developed by a large group of speakers of national and international reputation. All parts of the program have not yet been filled; but those who thus far agreed to speak, and the subjects of their addresses, are as follows:

Dr. William Childs Robinson, Professor of Historical Theology at Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, Georgia, also a member of the National American Calvinistic Conference Committee, will preach Sunday morning, February 21, 1944, at Central Presbyterian Church of Jackson. On the afternoon of the same day, he will address a mass meeting of laymen in the First Presbyterian Church on "Calvinism and the Bible."

Dr. William Childs Robinson, Professor of Historical Theology at Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, Georgia, also a member of the National American Calvinistic Conference Committee, will preach at the First Presbyterian Church, Greenwood, Mississippi, on Sunday morning, February 21. On Monday afternoon, February 22, he will speak in the Belhaven College Chapel on "Calvinism and Education."

Dr. Clarence Bouma, Professor of Chistian Ethics at Calvin Theological Seminary, President of the Second National Calvinistic Conference Committee, and a member of the National American Calvinistic Conference Committee, Editor of The Calvin Forum, will preach at Fondren Presbyterian Church on Sunday, February 21. On Monday morning, February 22, he will speak in the Belhaven College Chapel on "Calvinism and Christian Ethics." On Monday evening, February 22, Dr. Bouma will speak to the delegates, and special guests, including the Jackson Ministerial Association, following a dinner at Central Presbyterian Church, on "The Outlook for Calvinism in Europe".

At least three other prominent speakers will take part in the program, which is being planned by a Southern Regional Conference Committee, composed of Jackson ministers and laymen, of which Dr. J. Moody McDill, pastor of Fondren Presbyterian Church, is chairman. The steering sub-committee of the Southern Regional Committee, is composed of Dr. J. Moody McDill, Dr. G. T. Gillespie, President of Belhaven College; Dr. R. E. Hough, Pastor of Central Presbyterian Church; Dr. R. Girard Lowe, Pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Jackson; and Rev. W. A. Hall, Pastor of Power Memorial Presbyterian Church.

Emphasis in the program will be to place the presentation of the Calvinistic doctrines upon a more popular plane than at the American Calvinistic Conference, the national conference held in Grand Rapids, Michigan, at Calvin College and Seminary on June 3, 4, 5, 1942, where the addresses were of a more scholarly and technical order. These addresses of the national meeting have been published in the book, "The Word of God and the Reformed Faith," (cloth bound, 229 pages, $1.00, distributed by Baker's Book Store, 1019 Westly St., S.E., Grand Rapids, Mich.), which has sold with great rapidity. The hope of the Committee is that the Conference will not only prove stimulating to Calvinistic ministers, but will be a means of educating and strengthening the faith of laymen, by demonstrating that Calvinism offers in its theology a time-tested solution to the everyday problems of plain and simple men which will not only be of great value in overcoming the confusing problems of the present, but also will provide a workable pattern for the post-war world.

If men had properly realized the solution for their needs which can be found through the Calvinistic system, the Committee feels, they would not have been led to turn to Communism, Nazism, Fascism, and to the other spurious doctrines to find a practical way of meeting the issues of life. As J. S. Whale, President of Chestnut College, Cambridge, has pointed out, "The sense that the Church is somehow unreal is widespread. Its high claims and mystical language seem irrelevant in the context of common, everyday living. It has, apparently, little living relation to contemporary life." If in any sense this is true, it is hoped that the Conference can meet the challenge and the need of such opinions by a revival.
of enthusiasm for Calvinism as a practicable way of life as set forth in the Scriptures.

To this end, the Conference, the first regional conference to be held in the nation, will attempt to draw all Calvinists, not only of Mississippi, but also of the neighboring states, learned and unlearned, men and women, young and old, of whatever denomination; all, in fact, who believe as a fundamental principle, that conception of Calvinism summarized by Benjamin B. Warfield, that "lies in a profound apprehension of God in His majesty, with the inevitable accompanying poignant realization of the exact nature of the relation sustained to him by the creature as such, and particularly by the sinful creature. He who believes in God without reserve, and is determined that God shall be God to him in all his thinking, feeling, willing—in the entire compass of his life-activities, intellectual, moral, spiritual, throughout all his individual social, religious relations."

Further announcement of the Conference program and plans, and the details of registration will be made in a forthcoming issue of this publication. Watch for these details.

Brandon, Mississippi,
December, 1943. —The Presbyterian Herald,

**NEWS CHIPS AND COMMENTS**

**Believe It or Not.**

Believe it or not. Believe-it-or-not-Ripley is a Buddhist. So we are told by Philip G. Murray in *The Christian Century.*

**Writers, Books, Readers.**

For a number of years public trend has been away from books and toward magazines. Now the trend is reversed. Some 300,000,000 books of all kinds have been sold during the year 1943. This is an increase over 1942 of about 25%.

Of this gigantic total 15,000,000 are Bibles and religious books. Included also is Wendell Willkie's one and one-half million copies of *One World;* thirty-eight million 25-cent-a-piece Pocket Books; seven hundred thousand copies of *The Robe.*

The American people are buying books, they are reading books. But a great number of books are not worth the time nor the money of those who buy them. What James said of the tongue may be said also of the press: The press is a fire . . . Therewith we bless the Lord and Father; and therewith curse we men . . .

**War Plant Chaplains.**

At a recent meeting in Canada of Baptist, Presbyterian, Anglican, Salvation Army, and United Church representatives, a request was formulated and sent to the Ottawa government, that the government authorize the establishment of a chaplaincy service in certain of Canada's larger war plants. Business men and executives have promised small chapels and quiet rooms for the employees. Another step in the right direction. Here and there on a very small scale in the United States the plan is also put into operation.

**The Gospel Ordered Off the Air.**

United Evangelical Action reports that the Mutual Broadcasting Company adopted the policy of not selling time for religious broadcasting. This closes the last door to national Gospel broadcasting. The other three networks have long maintained this policy. The Federal Council of Churches is on the air, but it does not represent Evangelical Christianity. And the contracts of the Lutheran Hour and the Old Fashioned Revival Hour carry a two-weeks revocation clause. Add to this the fact that local stations much rather sell time to the networks than to individual churches and the picture does look gloomy indeed.

**The Ten Commandments.**

In Grand Rapids, Michigan, recently the Christian Guidance Bureau, supported by a large number of organizations, petitioned the Board of Education that the Ten Commandments without comment, but in a sympathetic manner, be read in all school classes.

The Board first appointed a committee to study the advisability of the project. The local *Herald* editorially expressed its astonishment that a request like that had to be studied at all. But when the Board of Education met to discuss the report of the committee, it in no uncertain terms told the Bureau representatives that they did not know anything about the wonderful conditions in the Grand Rapids public school system and that the essence of the Decalogue was taught constantly.

This matter shows how far in general the mind of people has strayed from the foundations of authority. Man-made opinions in class rooms are far better than the revealed will of God. A teacher's say-so is more effective than the Word of God. The Board of Education intends to sidetrack the Word of God and to substitute for it the word of mere man.

All Evangelical Churches everywhere should unite in cooperative effort to stem the tide of unbelief and rampant paganism. This is a "must" of the first order.

J. G. Van Dyke.
AMERICAN IDEALISM


The author expresses his general purpose in writing this book in the opening paragraph of the preface. Convinced that the philosophy of American democracy is idealistic and that this idealism finds its fullest expression in literature, he proposes to give a survey of American thought as it is reflected in the writings of literary men.

What the author means by idealism he tells us in the final chapter: "I have assumed generally that an idealist is one who believes that the ultimate reality is spiritual and that the universe is purposive in its evolution." This is rather a philosophical conception to which he does not strictly adhere inasmuch as he includes in the survey several cultural notions, such as faith in the soundness of common man, in the equality of all men, in the inevitability of progress in spite of temporary setbacks, all of them romantic notions that were current during the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries and that were associated with democracy. It would seem, therefore, that the title of the book should have been "The Idealism of Democracy as Reflected in American Literature." But this is a small matter. Authors should have some freedom in the formulation of the titles of their books.

The origin of idealism the author finds in three sources: Puritanism with its mysticism and moral power, eighteenth century rationalism with its faith in human nature and liberty, and the frontier with its ready acceptance of the ideas of freedom, equality, and natural rights. Its highest development was reached in the transcendentalism of Emerson and the mystic thought of Whitman. After the Civil War idealism suffered a decline, touching its nadir in the naturalism of men like Dreiser, Faulkner, Caldwell, and Farrell in fiction, of O'Neill in drama, and of T. S. Eliot in his chaotic poem called Waste Land, an interpretation of which movement Joseph Wood Krutch has given in The Modern Temper. The author, however, is an incurable optimist, for he can find gleams of hopefulness in the literary products of several in whom your reviewer can detect naught but confusion; and he concludes the book with the prophecy that idealism will revive sufficiently to be of great benefit to the world in general.

When Professor Stovall wrote this book, he undertook a project which is by no means easy. Nothing is harder than to give a true account of the ideologies of a nation's writers. First, there is the matter of selection, of inclusion and exclusion. Why, for example, did the author omit adequate reference to the thought of the Declaration of Independence, The Federalist, the speeches of Webster and Lincoln? Again, there is the matter of the relative importance of the several writers selected. Why, for example, did the author devote more space to the discussion of men like the eccentric Thoreau, the pessimistic Mark Twain, and the violent Robinson Jeffers than to the conservative James Russell Lowell? And why did he honor both Emerson and Whitman with an entire chapter devoted to each? The author was far more successful, so your reviewer judges, in the summaries of such newer writers as Irving and Cooper than he was in the elaborate treatment of his two favorites.

The question of both selection and relative treatment is in large part determined by the author's point of view. As we have seen, this happens to be idealism, more particularly that form of idealism which in American literature is known as transcendentalism. Even if this brand of idealism is not necessarily "to be preserved or to be lived in its original form," it "indicates the direction in which we are to travel," so he tells us. In his transcendental bias, therefore, we have the key to the author's evaluations. To illustrate, his ideal democracy rests upon the two fundamental ideas of the sovereignty of the individual in distinction from the sovereignty of God and of the equality of all men, both of which essentials come to their fullest and highest realization in the mystical union of the individual soul with universal soul or God. This seems to be nothing less than the rapture of Emersonian pantheism. Again, the author's sympathy with Emersonian mysticism colors his evaluation of Puritanism, which, being theistic, emphasizes the transcendence of God as well as His immanence and therefore insists on attributing sovereignty to God rather than to man. And so when he compares Calvin's God, who is the source of all authority, to an oriental potenteate, we are not surprised; we realize that he is consistent even though he echoes a characterization made by most Puritan-baiters. It goes without saying that for a political philosophy which springs from pantheistic rapture a Christian theist simply has no use. He must insist on the essential distinctness of the infinite God from the finite creature; likewise he must insist on absolute sovereignty as inhering in God.

Why so much should be made of Walt Whitman in a survey of idealism is not clear. Monistic in his thinking Whitman seems to have been, but it is hard to make out whether the poet was a materialist or an idealist, so vague and incoherent he is in his rhapsodic effusions. And the strain of coarseness and indelicacy that runs through much of his poetry as well as his utter indifference to the distinction between good and evil and between the higher and the lower cultural values seems incompatible with true idealism in spite of the romantic effervescence with which the poet pours forth his hazy and crude notions. What he admirably says in criticism of American democracy does not in any way modify or set aside this conclusion, nor does it compensate for his "barbaric yawn" which he sounded over the roof of the world.

There remains the question of whether in any attempt to give a true record of idealism in America one should confine oneself to such convictions as more or less clearly come to expression in writings deserving the name of literature. Your reviewer does not think so. Before 1800 American thought was in the main conservative, and even in the twentieth century it was so pervaded with an intolerant Puritan morality that it choked the fountains of artistic endeavor. It compelled the "younger generation"; at least this is what many of them averred, to flee these shores for foreign capitals. It was especially among the common people, among those who were to read Uncle Tom's Cabin, Ten Nights in a Bar Room, G poor Hur, and Freakles, that conservative tendencies lingered and remained a more or less active force. But the radicals, the Lamech of these latter decades, have been the most vocal. Their ability to make themselves heard, however, does not guarantee a faithfulness of reflection of the idealism that lives in the heart of the masses; generally, it is flagrantly at odds with such idealism. That it was so during the nineteenth century your reviewer is sure.
BOOKS IN BRIEF

An unusually useful book. Written so that anyone with average education and ordinary intelligence can readily follow the writer. Deals with many aspects of the popular but erroneous premillennial hypothesis. Discusses also the less popular postmillennial theory. Shows the nonmillennial or time-honored exegesis to be the only tenable one. Why not speak of nonmillennial rather than amillennial? Why a Latin word with one Greek letter for prefix when there is a good all-Latin word which is far easier to understand? The reviewer dares predict that no "pre" will be able to answer the arguments of this book. Having now two copies of it, he has sent one to Dr. Louis E. Talbot, president of the Los Angeles Bible Institute, who daily pollutes the air with strong premillennial heresies. Even today's history has given the lie to the premillennial error that Christ may return "any hour now, before the tribulation of the nations sets in." After reading a volume such as this one marvels that evangelical men can be so blind.

J. K. v. B.

Quite a difference between the author's earlier sermons on Twelve Great Questions about Christ (1923) and this volume. The former all dealt with Christian doctrine; the latter contain little doctrine. Yet they are good sermons. Deal with practical problems of the average man. These 16 sermons read like an interesting novel. Apt illustrations; worth-while poetry. Fine descriptions of natural and other scenes. The reviewer cannot agree with the explanation of the scene at Endor. See his The Chaos of Cults, 3d ed., p. 30. The words on p. 175: "It was for you, for me, that Christ entered into his agony. Does that mean nothing to you? It was for your sins and for your salvation that he drank this cup", we consider unwarranted. They smack of universalism, either Arminian or Lutheran. It was not so the apostles addressed men. They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved." Which is different. But for these two little criticisms, heartily recommended. Good psychology!

J. K. v. B.

Here is something new: Stone Lectures that may be read through, and fully understood, by any layman in theology at two settings. That is all to the good. Why should the results of careful study be handed down in such a fashion that only a few can appreciate them? These lectures discuss Horace Bushnell, Henry Ward Beecher, Dwight L. Moody, Washington Gladden, Walter Rauschenbusch. All of these have been epoch-making preachers, and have left behind a trail that has by no means been effaced from contemporaneous pulpit work. From this volume one may learn without much trouble just what these men stood for, and what their influence has been and is. Criticism is not entirely lacking. And where it is inserted, it is criticism from the evangelical standpoint. But the professor of Ecclesiastical History and Church Polity at Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, Virginia, might have put a little more emphasis upon his critics.

J. K. v. B.

A rather complete textbook on how to make use of all modern means to advertise one's church, and to spread the gospel by means of the printed word. Surely quite up-to-date. While no church could use all the means advocated, we doubt if any one church could not benefit by putting into practice some of the methods here recommended. Well worth having on one's shelves, for occasional reference and consultation.

J. K. v. B.

It is not a book by Dr. Zwemer. Dr. Zwemer has written many good books and done a great missionary work in earlier life, one might incline to take literally his words of some years ago, that "Life Begins at Seventy." This latest book shows Dr. Zwemer energetic, keen and up-to-date. The book has 14 chapters. The earlier one prepares for an admission of the extreme importance of the Great Commission in its Markian version as well as in Matthew's Gospel. Later chapters show how the apostles stood under and carried out the great command. The last chapter, "What Constitutes a Call", is itself a call to men and women to give themselves to the work. Yes, a good book, and full of material that preachers may use to good advantage. The footnote on p. 139, however, is unpardonable; "Concerning Paul's prophecies regarding the Second Advent and the Day of Judgment, see A. C. Gaebelein, The Prophet St. Paul and His Eschatology, New York, 1939." Gaebelein? The most arbitrary and radical of premillennial polluters of the gospel! The Princeton professor would have done better had he referred his readers to Geerhardus Vos, The Pauline Eschatology.

J. K. VAN BAALEN.
Mount Vernon, Washington.

KEEP UP YOUR READING

A Book a Month.

Are you interested in the Antiquity of Man and the related question of the Chronology of the Bible? Was Ussher correct in holding that the Bible teaches us that the earth and humanity are only about 6,000 years old? What must you think of the 4004 B. C. at the top of column one of the marginal references in your Bible?
Here are some pertinent sentences from our Book of the Month:
"Since archaeology indicates so convincingly that man has been on the earth much more than 6,000 years, the defence of the trustworthiness of the Genesis record should be thankful.

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that a careful study of the Biblical data does not lead to the conclusion that the Ussher chronology must be accepted as taught in Scripture; and he should therefore recognize that too much reliance on the evidence of this chronology is to place a stumbling-block in the way of those who sincerely desire to accept the Book of Genesis as historically reliable."

Or take this paragraph on evolution and the superhistorical as it bears upon the trustworthiness of the Biblical record:


The Christian Theistic Philosophy of Law and Juriprudence. By W. Stanford Reid.
Review of Books.


John Calvin on the Atonement. By T. C. Hammond.
Doctrines of the Soul in Islam. By Edwin E. Calverley.
The Kingdom of Npue in Nigeria. By E. W. Smith.
Al-Alam's Version of Zechariah. By S. M. Reynolds.
Printing in Turkey in the 18th Century. By J. Kingsley Birge.

Current Topics.

The Scottish Church Disruption of 1843. By Aeneas MacDonald.
Book Reviews.

Die Historiese Agtergrond van Essiegli. D. F. Erasmus.
Tussenkerlike Samenwerking. I. D. Kruger.
Chiismie en die Kerkerleer. P. A. Verhoef.
Godsdienstonderswys in die Middelbare Skool. H. J. J. Bingle.
Die Loop van die Dinge. L. J. du Plessis.
Oor Boeke.
Ruilwaarde.

Exegesis of Romans V-VIII. By G. T. Thomson.
The Beautiful In the Divine Order. By A. W. McClymont.
The Punishment of the Men of Bethshemesh. By O. T. Allis.
Book Reviews.